



February 17, 2022

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Miner, Representative France and members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Mark Pooler with the Southington and Cheshire Community YMCAs and I am submitting comments on Governor Lamont's proposed state budget as it relates to the Office of Early Childhood.

I urge the state of Connecticut to increase their investment in Care4Kids and School Readiness. During the past 20 years, these programs have only received a three percent increase in funding from the state of Connecticut. During that same time, the minimum wage has increased by over 50% and inflation has risen by almost 50% as well.

Almost 1,400 children utilize the Care4Kids program, and 1,000 children are enrolled in a school readiness with one of our YMCAs in Connecticut. That is why it's imperative that our childcare centers receive a rate increase so that we can continue to provide safe and quality childcare to Connecticut's children.

Childcare is unaffordable in the state of Connecticut. The state needs to realize the importance of this industry and invest the appropriate level of funding. Southington and Cheshire have hardworking families that need affordable child care, that is what the YMCA provides! Please do the right thing for the communities of CT!

Sincerely,

**Mark Pooler**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
SOUTHINGTON-CHESHIRE COMMUNITY YMCAs

**Southington-Cheshire Community YMCAs**

29 High Street, Southington, CT 06489

860-628-5597 – [www.sccymca.org](http://www.sccymca.org)

YMCA Mission: To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

Financial assistance available for qualifying individuals and families.

The YMCA is a not-for-profit 501c(3) organization.